

# Summary of SALT Transcription Conventions



**1. Transcript Format.** Each entry begins with one of the following symbols. If an entry is longer than one line, continue it on the next line.

- \$ Identifies the speakers in the transcript; always the first line of the transcript. Example: \$ Child, Examiner
- C Child/Client utterance. The actual character used depends on the \$ speaker line.
- E Examiner utterance. The actual character used depends on the \$ speaker line.
- + Typically used for identifying information such as name, age, and context. Example of current age: + CA: 5;7
- Time marker. Example of two-minute marker: - 2:00
- : Pause between utterances of different speakers. Example of five-second pause: : :05 or :05
- ; Pause between utterances of same speaker. Example of three-second pause: ; :03
- = Comment line. This information is used for transcriber comments and is not analyzed in any way.

**2. End of Utterance Punctuation.** Every utterance must end with one of these six punctuation symbols.

- |   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| . | Statement, comment. Do not use a period for abbreviations. | ^ | Interrupted utterance. The speaker is interrupted and does not complete his/her thought/utterance.         |
| ! | Surprise, exclamation.                                     | > | Abandoned utterance. The speaker does not complete his/her thought/utterance but has not been interrupted. |
| ? | Question.  |   |  |
| ~ | Intonation prompt.<br>Example: E And then you have to~     |   |  |

**3. { } Comments within an utterance.**

Example: C Lookit {C points to box}.

Nonverbal utterances of communicative intent are placed in braces. Example: C {nods}.

**4. Unintelligible Segments.** X is used to mark unintelligible sections of an utterance. Use X for an unintelligible word, XX for an unintelligible segment of unspecified length, and XXX for an unintelligible utterance.

Example 1: C He XX today. Example 2: C XXX.

**5. Bound Morphemes.** Words which contain a slash "/" indicate that the word is contracted, conjugated, inflected, or pluralized in a regular manner. The root word is entered in its conventional spelling followed by a slash "/" and then the bound morpheme.  
**English and Spanish**

/S Plural. Words that end in "s" but represent one entity are not slashed.

Examples: kitten/s, baby/s, pants, rana/s, feliz/s, flor/s

Irregular plurals are not marked, but are typed as spelled, e.g., leaves, mice, geese, lives, wolves.

**English only**

/Z Possessive inflection.

Examples: dad/z, Mary/z. Do not mark possessive pronouns, e.g., his, hers, ours, yours.

/S/Z Plural and Possessive. Example: baby/s/z

/ED Past tense. Predicate adjectives are not slashed.

Examples: love/ed, die/ed, was tired, is bored

/3S 3<sup>rd</sup> Person Singular verb form. Irregular forms are not slashed.

Examples: go/3s, tell/3s, does

/ING Progressive verb form. The gerund use of the verb form is not slashed.

Examples: go/ing, run/ing, bike/ing, went swimming, reading is fun

/N'T, /'T Negative contractions. Irregular forms are not slashed

Examples: can/'t, does/n't, won't

/'LL, /'M, /'D, /'RE, /'S, /'VE Contracted verb forms → WILL, AM, WOULD, ARE, IS, HAVE.

Examples: I/'ll, I/'m, I/'d, we/'re, he/'s, we/'ve

*The following contractions were marked in the Expository and Persuasion database samples:*

/H'S, /H'D, /D'S, /D'D, /'US Contracted → HAS, HAD, DOES, DID, US.

Examples: He/h's been sick. We/h'd better go. What/d's he do for a living? Why/d'd the boy look there? Let/'us go.

*In all other reference databases "let's" was not marked and the non-standard contracted forms were transcribed as two words, e.g., He has, What does.*

**6. Bound Pronominal Clitics (Spanish).** Pronominal clitics may be either bound or unbound. When bound, they are preceded by a plus sign. Examples: gritando+le, déja+lo, dá+me+lo

**7. Mazes.** Filled pauses, false starts, repetitions, and reformulations.

( ) Surrounds the words/part-words that fall into these categories.

Example: C And (then um) then (h\*) he left.

**8. Omissions.** Partial words, omitted words, omitted bound morphemes, and omitted pronominal clitics are denoted by an asterisk (\*).

\* Following one or more letters indicates that a word was started but left unfinished.

Example: C I (w\* w\*) want it.

\* Preceding a word indicates that an obligatory word was omitted.

Example: C Give it \*to me.

/ \* Following a slash the \* is followed by the bound morpheme which was omitted, indicating the omission of an obligatory bound morpheme.

Example: C The car go/\*3s fast.

+ \* Following a plus sign the \* is followed by the Spanish clitic which was omitted, indicating the omission of an obligatory pronominal clitic.

Example: C Él está gritando+\*le a la rana.

**9. Overlapping Speech.** When both speakers are speaking at the same time, the words or silences that occur at the same time are surrounded by angle brackets < >.

Example 1: C I want you to do it < > for me. Example 2: C Can I have that <one>?

E <Ok>.

E <Uhhuh>.

**10. Linked words.** The underscore “\_” is used to link multiple words so they are treated as a single word. Examples include titles of movies and books, compound words, proper names, and words or phrases repeated multiple times.

**11. Root identification.** The vertical bar “|” is used to identify the root word.

**English uses:**

Linked words repeated for emphasis.

Example: C The boy ran very very\_very|very fast.

Overgeneralization errors.

Example: C He goed|go[EO:went] to the park by himself.

Shortened words.

Example: C He was sad cuz|because they left.

Root form of irregular verbs. *Note that the root forms of irregular verbs are not identified in any of the reference databases.*

Example: C The bird flew|fly/ed away.

**Spanish uses:**

Inflected word forms.

Example: C Había|haber una vez un niño que tenía|tener una rana.

Diminutives.

Example: C El perrito|perro tumbó|tumbar las abeja/s.

Linked words repeated for emphasis.

Example: C Dijeron rana rana\_rana|rana dónde estás.

**12. Sound Effects and Idiosyncratic Forms %.** The percent sign is used to identify sound effects which are essential to the meaning or structure of the utterance. Non-essential sound effects are entered as comments. Strings of the same sound are linked together.

Example 1: C The dog went %woof\_woof. Example 2: C The dog barked {woof woof}.

The percent sign is also used to identify idiosyncratic forms. These are immature productions which are consistent in reference to an object, person, or situation.

Example 1: C See %vroom {car}. Example 2: C My %coopa {cookie}.

### 13. Spelling Conventions.

- Filled pause words: AH, EH, ER, HM, HMM, UH, UM, MM, and any word with the code [FP]
- Yes words: OK, AHA, MHM, UHHUH (*English & Spanish*)  
YEAH, YEP, YES (*English only*)  
Sí (*Spanish only*)
- No words: NO, AHAH, MHMH, UHUH (*English & Spanish*)  
NAH, NOPE (*English only*)
- Numbers (*examples*): 21 or TWENTYONE, 17 or DIECISIETE
- Clock time: Do *not* use colons when typing clock time (*they will be interpreted as pauses*). Type the words.  
Examples: seven\_forty\_five, sevenfortyfive, eight\_thirty
- Reflexive vs Non-reflexive pronouns (*Spanish only*)  
The following pronouns can be used both reflexively and non-reflexively: ME, TE, SE, OS, NOS. Attach the code [X] when used reflexively.  
Examples: C El niño se[X] fue con el perro. C El perro me ayudó a conseguir la rana.
- Other English spellings:

AIN'T	GONNA	LET'S or LET/'US	NOPE	OUTTA ( <i>out of</i> )	USETA
ATTA	GOTTA ( <i>got to</i> )	LIKETA	OH, OOH	SHOULDA	WANNA
BETCHA	HMM	LOOKIT	OOP, OOPS, OOPSY	SPOSTA	WHATCHA
COULDA	HAFTA	MUSTA	OUGHTA	TRYNTA	WOULDA
DON'T	HUH	NOONE	OURS	UHOH	YOURS

### 14. [ ] Codes. Codes are used to mark words or utterances. Codes are placed in brackets [ ] and cannot contain blank spaces. Codes used to mark words are inserted at the end of a word with no spaces between the code and the word.

a) Codes used to mark errors in the reference database samples:

[EO: __] used to mark overgeneralization errors.	C He falled   fall[EO:fell].
[EW: __] used to mark other word-level errors.	C He were[EW:was] look/ing.
[EW] used to mark extraneous words.	C And then the boy is a[EW] sleep/ing.
[EU] used to mark utterance-level errors.	C And they came to stop/ed [EU].
[FP] used to mark non-standard filled pause words.	C The dog (um like[FP]) fell down.

b) Other codes used in the Bilingual S/E reference database samples:

[F] used to mark fragments due to utterance segmentation with modified communication units.	C The gopher look/ed out of the hole. C and bit the boy [F].
[CS] used to mark code-switched words.	C The dog fell from la[CS] ventana[CS].
[WO] used to mark utterances with non-standard word order.	C And then fell down the dog and the boy [WO].
[I] used to mark vocabulary provided by the examiner (imitated word).	C And then the :05 <> owl[I] scare/ed him. E <Owl>.
[X] used to mark Spanish reflexive pronouns.	C El niño se[X] fue con el perro.